

Yasa language

Iyasa (Yasa, Yassa) is a Bantu language of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea by Ndowe coastal fishing people. It is also spoken by Pygmies, perhaps Babongo, in Gabon.

Iyasa also goes by the names Bongwe, Lyaasa, and Maasa. Dialects are *Bweko*, *Vendo*, *Bodele*, *Marry*, *One*, *Asonga*, *Bomui*, *Mogana*, *Mooma*, *Mapanga*. It may in turn be a dialect of Kombe. Speakers report that Kombe and Iyasa are almost perfectly mutually intelligible.^[4]

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Classification

Dieu and Renaud (1993) classify Iyasa as a Sawabantu language (A.30 in Guthrie classification).^[5]

Geographic Distribution

Iyasa is spoken along the coast of Cameroon south of Kribi, including in the city of Campo. It is also spoken across the Ntem River in Equatorial Guinea.^[6] The northernmost Iyasa village is Lolabe, 31 km south of Kribi.^[4]

Sounds/Phonology

Iyasa has a seven-vowel system:^[4]

Iyasa	
Bongwe	
Native to	Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon
Ethnicity	Yasa and Pygmies ^[1]
Native speakers	2,400 in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea (2000–2011) ^[1] unknown number in Gabon ^[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none">Atlantic–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Benue–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bantoid<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bantu (Zone A)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sawabantu (A.30)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kombe?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Iyasa
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	yko
Glottolog	yasa1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/yasa1242) ^[2]
Guthrie code	A.33a ^[3]

Monophthong phonemes

	Front	Central	Back
<u>Close</u>	i		u
<u>Near-close</u>			
<u>Close-mid</u>	e		o
<u>Mid</u>			
<u>Open-mid</u>	ɛ		ɔ
<u>Open</u>		a	

It also has 22 phonemic consonants:^[4]

	<u>Bilabial</u>		<u>Labio-dental</u>		<u>Dental</u>		<u>Alveolar</u>		<u>Post-alveolar (Palato-alveolar)</u>	<u>Palatal</u>		<u>Velar</u>		<u>Labialized Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Plosive</u>	p						t	d			ɟ	k	g		
<u>Implosive</u>		ɓ						ɗ							
<u>Affricate</u>									tʃ	dʒ					
<u>Fricative</u>				v			s								h
<u>Nasal</u>		m						n			ɲ		ŋ		
<u>Approximant</u>											j			w	
<u>Lateral approximant</u>								l							

Grammar

Noun classes

Iyasa has 12 noun classes, as outlined in the table below (adapted from Bôt 2011 and Bouh Ma Sitna 2004):^{[6][4]}

Class number	Prefix	Allomorphs	Example (IPA)	Translation (French)	Translation (English)
1	mù-	m ^w -	mù-tʃétʃé mw-ánà	le bébé l'enfant	baby child
2	wà-	w-	wà-dó	les femmes	women
3	mò-	m-, m ^w -, ŋ-	mò-ló ŋ-kóʒé	la fête le panier	party basket
4	mè-	m-, m ^j -	mè-kɔ	les paniers	baskets
5	dī-	d-, i-, dʒ-	dī-lô ì-dàkà	l'oreille la maladie	ear illness
6	mà-	m-	mà-lô	les oreilles	ears
7	è-	èj-	è-lémi	la langue	tongue
8	bè-	bèj-	bè-kòndà bèj-ìmà	les souliers les choses	shoes things
9/10	N-	m-, n-, ŋ-, ɲ-, ø	m-bàdì n-dómì ø-sòkù	maison(s) père(s) éléphant(s)	house(s) father(s) elephant(s)
13	lì-	l-	lì-ɲòní l-éjì	les oiseaux les soleils	birds suns
14	bù-	b ^w -	bù-dù b ^w -àlò	l'âne la pirogue	donkey canoe
19	vi-	v-	vì-ɲòní	l'oiseau	bird

References

1. Iyasa (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/yko/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yasa" (<http://glottolog.org/source/languoid/id/yasa1242>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Jouni Filip Maho, 2009. New Updated Guthrie List Online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180203191542/http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf>)
4. Bouh Ma Sitna, Charles Lwanga (2004). *Le Syntagme Nominal du Yasa*. University of Yaoundé I: Master's thesis.
5. Dieu, Michel, and Patrick Renaud. 1993. *Situation linguistique en Afrique centrale, inventaire pre@liminaire: Le Cameroun*. In *Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun*. Yaounde@: ACCT-CERDOTOLA-DGRST.

6. Bôt, Dieudonné Martin Luther (2011). "Le Préfixe Nominale Yasa". *Journal of West African Languages*. **38** (1): 99–122.

External links

- [lyasa page \(http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/558\)](http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/558) at the [Endangered Languages Project](#)
- [Homepage of the lyasa language committee \(http://www.peupleiyasa.com\)](http://www.peupleiyasa.com)
- [Etomba a lyasa Facebook group \(https://www.facebook.com/groups/iyasa/\)](https://www.facebook.com/groups/iyasa/)
- [Paradisec has an open access collection of Roger Blench's materials \(RB5 \(http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/RB5\)\)](http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/RB5) that includes Yasa language materials

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